DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 127 409 UD 016 254

TITLE Curriculum Planning for Equal Educational Opportunity in K-12 School Systems.
INSTITUTION Washington Office of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Olympia.
PUB DATE Mar 73
NOTE 16p.; Revised version of a presentation given originally during A Showcase of Innovative Programs and Practices (Yakima, Washington, October 20, 1972)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Cultural Education; Curriculum Development; *Curriculum Guides; Educational Opportunities; Educational Resources; *Elementary Secondary Education; Ethnic Groups; *Intergroup Education; Intergroup Relations; *Kindergarten; Minority Group Children; *Minority Groups; Race Relations; United States History
IDENTIFIERS *Washington

ABSTRACT

One of the valued premises of public education in the State of Washington is that curriculum in the schools must be left flexible, subject to the needs of each student and community, the judgment of professional educators, and the demands of society. The first purpose of this guide is to assist schools in maintaining self-determination. The second purpose is to offer help on the specific topic in the following ways: to assist in resolving some problems and alleviating some tensions through education and communication among racial and ethnic groups; to provide sufficient background information to help teachers at all grade levels to become better acquainted with the minorities; to help teachers incorporate into their present programs learning about the role of minority groups in the development of America; to assist teachers and students in attaining greater understanding of the ways of thinking among people of the various cultures within this society; and, to encourage teachers to give students some appreciation of the contributions of minorities in the building of the U.S. as a nation, as evident in such fields as art, music, literature, linguistics, science, social studies, and the entertainment world. (Author/JM)

****
* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *
****

ED127409

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

CURRICULUM PLANNING FOR EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

in K-12 school systems

UD 016 254

Dr. Frank B. Brouillet
Superintendent of Public Instruction
State of Washington

THE K-12 CURRICULUM

&

EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

Dr. Frank B. Brouillet

The project reported herein was performed pursuant to a contract with the United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare Office of Education

The K-12 Curriculum

&

Equal Educational Opportunity

A Rationale for Multi-ethnic Curriculum Planning

This is a revision of a presentation given originally during A Showcase of Innovative Programs and Practices in Yakima, Washington, October 20, 1972.

Warren H. Burton

Dr. Frank Brouillet
State Superintendent
of Public Instruction

Dr. Don Hair
Assistant Superintendent
Curriculum & Instruction

March, 1973

CONTENTS

A Statement of Purpose ---------- *1*

Basic Premises of Equal Educational Opportunity --- *1-3*

The Compelling Force ---------- *3-6*

A Rationale For School Planning ---------- *6-7*

Guidelines ---------- *8-11*

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:

One of the valued premises of public education in the State of Washington is that curriculum in the schools must be left flexible, subject to the needs of each student and community, the judgment of professional educators, and the demands of society.

From time to time there are pressures from vested-interest groups for the inclusion of specific courses in school curriculum. Groups of educators usually try to accomplish their goals by means of education and influence. Nonprofessional groups, however, more often seek to establish legal requirement through special legislation.

In keeping with this philosophy, the first purpose of this guide is to assist schools in maintaining self-determination.

The second purpose is to offer help on the specific topic in the following ways:

To assist in resolving some problems and alleviating some tensions through education about and communication among racial and ethnic groups.

To bring to the attention of the schools of Washington the need to include significant American minorities in the study of all facets of the history and culture of the United States.

To provide sufficient background information and bibliography to help teachers at all grade levels to become better acquainted with the minorities.

To help teachers incorporate into their present programs learning about the involvement and influence of minority groups in the development of America.

To assist teachers and students in attaining greater understanding of the ways of thinking among people of the various cultures within this society.

To encourage teachers to give students some appreciation of the contributions of minorities in the building of the United States as a nation, evident in such fields as art, music, literature, linguistics, science, social studies, and the entertainment world.

To help bring the democratic ideal of equality and opportunity for all closer to reality.

Several basic premises of equal educational opportunity are:

Every person has value, uniqueness, and ability to make individual contributions to society. He has equal right to human dignity and the acceptance of his contribution and himself.

Every person has a right to self-respect, religious belief, and hope -- opportunity for health, continuing education, self-determination, a job, management of his income -- and the "pursuit of happiness" within the law. He has a right to succeed and a right to fail.

These rights are accompanied by equal responsibilities for wise decision-making and recognition that the free exercise of one's own rights ends where another's rights begin.

The laws of the land undertake to guarantee these privileges for all.

The kind of society developed in any culture is an outgrowth of the system of values held by the people who make up that culture whether those values are written into the laws of the land or are an underlying system of which the people are scarcely aware.

Between the American commitment and an approach to realization of the ideal is the reality of human beings with their ability to conceive the ideal and block the accomplishment of it by their own imperfection. The struggle toward accomplishment of the ideal is a continuing, unending process.

Prejudice in its broadest sense -- prejudging before knowledge -- is both a result and a subsequent cause of ignorance. The education of a man involves a lifelong struggle to push back encircling ignorance.

The human propensity to prejudge is present, however, undiscerned, in practically every aspect of life where opinions and decisions are concerned. To have complete knowledge in any area is rarely possible.

The K-12 curriculum should deal realistically with the persistent issues of American society. Consequently, there should be an open, rational, examination of information about minority groups and human relations, conducted in a spirit of free exchange of ideas, is a valuable experience for students and an essential one if they are to be prepared to assume their role as participating members of a democracy. The primary purpose of such an examination should be to provide students with an increasing degree of skill in the analysis of issues involving human relations.

Students and educators should have:

A right to study and discuss minority groups as an integral part of the school program.

The right of access to publications or statements which are related to the minority group(s) being studied.

A right to study and discuss all sides of an issue involving minorities in an atmosphere free from compulsion.

A right to express opinions and to reach conclusions that may differ from those opinions or conclusions expressed by others.

The responsibility to assure that the discussion of minority groups in the classroom should always be consistent with rules and procedures of the democratic process.

The administration and the local school board of all school districts and schools should:

Be responsible for the development of a continuous, coordinated inclusion of minority group content in the total school program.

Seek to employ teachers educated adequately to teach about minority groups.

Permit teachers to acquire and use materials which, in the best judgment of the teachers, need to be used in teaching about minorities.

Protect the teacher's right of free access to materials and to the choice of content dealing with minorities to be studied.

Protect the teacher and student from unwarranted attempts by private groups to interfere with the teaching of content about minority groups.

Protect the right of students to hear responsible presentations on all sides of relevant issues concerning minorities.

Have a right to expect teachers to use common sense and professional judgment in working with minority group content.

THE COMPELLING FORCE:

In our democratic society, equal educational opportunity for all children has become the compelling force in planning and implementing change in the educational spectrum. The philosophy of equality is prevalent in every area of American society from the area of economics with the anti-poverty programs to the area of education with the various federal aid to education programs.

Education in our democratic society must equip children to develop their potential and to participate fully in American life. It is essential to the future of the American society that desegregation-integration-pluralism is the priority educational strategy. All of us have viewed the consequences of racial isolation in education, particularly at the elementary school level, and of attitudes toward race, on every side, produced by centuries of myth, ignorance and bias.

It is indispensable that opportunities for interaction among the races be expanded.

The public school, then, is faced with at least two explicit challenges: on one side, the school is expected to teach only the basic skills with little or no regard for the affective domain; on the other side, the public school is expected to affect the values, attitudes, and self-actualization needs of public school children. The trick is to achieve both of these essential goals with maximum efficiency and impact and minimum difficutly.

Educators have a right to feel pleased. We have, at this time, many academic scholars, curriculum innovators, research and development groups, and publishers of materials working in our behalf. We are beginning to get fully developed programs in certain fields and promising portions of programs with the appropriate supporting materials in other fields.

Yet, we realize that all this activity is not enough. A design for continuous progress of entire personalities will not be achieved by the mere assembling of various new pieces of curriculum.

It is essential that all important elements are included and that these elements are structured into a mutually complementary and reinforcing entirety.

This is a monumental task yet it must be accomplished in an evolutionary process.

In the past the school has been used as an institutional device for cultural assimilation; to make, literally, the United States a homogeneous nation of multi-hued Americans.

This institutional device, utilizing the ancient concept of "cultural deprivation" is not merely an insult to every minority student; it is an extension of the missionary urge of White Anglo Saxon Protestants (WASPs) to demonstrate the assumed superiority of their culture by making everyone over to their own image.

It should be mentioned that not all educators who force the culturally different child into the American mold would do so because of a conscious desire to implement a superiority complex or because of a mono-cultural prejudice. Many have never thought of the United States as a culturally heterogeneous nation and assume that minority groups must conform in order to compete in our American society.

However, the realities of American life indicate differently. The bicultural Chinese American, for example, has advantages in the qualitative areas of life such as access to a dual heritage in literature, philosophy and art. In addition, he has the practical economic advantages of being bilingual. The fact is that the Caucasian middle class has controlled the public schools for at least a century. The various racial-cultural minorities have been guinea pigs for experiments in mono-cultural, mono-lingual, vacuum ideology and compensatory education for a lengthy period of time.

What is needed is a completely different conception of the function of the school and its relationship to cultural heterogeneity.

The argument for culturally heterogeneous schools is not totally dependent upon pedagogical needs. Any society which gives a high value to democracy and individual freedom cannot consistently utilize the school as an instrument of enforced cultural change.

What kind of democracy would utilize public schools to suppress the heritages of minorities simply because they are minorities?

What kind of democracy can utilize the schools as a means to diminish individual freedom and enforce conformity?

Creating a system of mono-cultural schools is not merely damaging to the self-confidence and self-knowledge of students drawn from the various racial and cultural groups. Majority group students are being deprived in our schools when they master only one language, when they learn about a biased viewpoint of American history, when they are exposed to only one musical tradition, when they read only one kind of literature, when they learn only one approach to the visual arts, and when they are exposed to a curriculum which hasn't any deep roots in the soil of their region and in America.

The problem is to educate all children in such a way that the school is both relevant to the individual and to the full and complete heritage of the region and the nation.

The multi-cultural reality of American life and history should be a part of every school's curriculum.

The structure of schools must be flexible to take advantage of cultural differences in a common concern -- the successful progress of children in school.

The following are suggested as recommendations for corrective actions:

1. Freedom, tolerance, and cosmopolitanism must be exhibited by school district employees as an example for the children, youth, and adults of the communities served.

2. Each school must be responsive to the needs and interests of all the students which it serves.

3. All segments of the population should have a voice in policy-making and educational planning.

4. The school must replace irrelevant attacks upon the cultural values of minority groups with concentration of essential learning.

5. The school must recognize and utilize the cultural assets of minority values of minority groups with concentration of essential learning.

6. The curricula of our schools should vary from region to region in order to reflect the rich diversity of American life.

7. Bilingualism should be regarded as not merely an asset, but as a necessity in the twentieth century; all pupils should be expected to master at least two languages in the elementary grades.

8. All teachers and administrators should be required to receive training of an anthropological-sociological nature and be expected to possess or acquire the linguistic skills necessary for communication with local students and their parents

SCHOOL PLANNING - Rationale

Incorporating information about American minority groups into school learning experiences is more a matter of planning than of squeezing an additional unit of work into curriculum.

Most teachers have studied very little about minorities in their own formal education. It, therefore, comes as a surprise to many that, in general, whole segments of the American story and culture are missing from the educational pattern. References to the individuals of minority groups who were involved in crises in our national history or who have shown marked creativity, courage, or character in their special fields are increasing. Even less attention has been given to the economic, political, social, and artistic influences of minorities as groups. Because the strands regarding the involvement of such groups as American Negroes, or Blacks, American Indians, or Native Americans, Jews, Asians, and Mexican Americans have been largely omitted from textbooks and literature, few teachers have been aware of the need to supplement this material from other sources for the courses they teach.

The explanations for the omission form three schools of thought. According to some historians, the omission was originally intentional, part of a deliberate plan to clear from the pages of American history the guilt of conquest of Indian lands, slavery of imported Africans, and exploitation of all such peoples. Another part of this alleged plan was to protect the economic dominance of the white man by presenting him as superior in a world of "treacherous aboriginies" and "inferior blacks," fit only to be "kept in their place" of dependence.

Other students of the problem are more generous toward the original writers, concluding that the omission was a psychological oversight. According to them, not mentioning minorities' part of history was a subconscious burial of a sense of guilt, accompanied by the rationalization that a darker-skinned person is thicker-skinned and does not experience equal physical or emotional pain, love, ambition, or intellectual activity.

Still a third group acknowledges an honest oversight, which nevertheless perpetuated a degree of ignorance. This approach, coming a bit later, viewed history in terms of the activity of the great majority and did not miss the parts omitted from the original writings. There was neither guile nor guilt. It is undoubtedly this approach that has continued through the years among more recent historians who based their writing on earlier books, perpetuating their weaknesses, and among teachers who could teach only what was offered them in textbooks.

It is disturbingly reminiscent of the novel 1984 to realize in a time of such tremendous influence of the mass media that manipulation or oversight in recording history can have such far-reaching and devastating effects eventually. It is also interesting that many library shelves have all along contained the records, in non-textbook form, of the involvement of minority groups in the development of America. It was not, however, until about 1967, that this material began to appeal to writers and to appear in a variety of new publications from many sources.

The influence of this handling of the American story has been subtle but certain. Americans with no personal or ancestral responsibility for earlier evils may assume that Indians are savage, that Mexican-Americans are treacherous, and that Negroes are inferior. This impression along with the natural separation of peoples by subcultures may contribute to the tendency of members of all groups to feel comfortable with the familiar and to experience aversion from the unfamiliar in appearance and culture, without feelings of hatred. They may therefore seek to maintain what is known as "social distance."

The attitudes of both whites and non-whites are deep and complex. Any cursory observation or surface explanation without the assistance of sociology and psychology and without direct, genuine communication with members of other groups is probably over-simplified and untrue. Certainly labels and sweeping generalizations are suspect.

The reality of America is infinite diversity -- a complexity of origins, races, religions, creeds, life-styles, and subcultures. This diversity, one that contributed to this nation's quality and strength, has been compounded by America's rapid population movements from rural to urban areas, from cities to suburbs, and from one region of the country to another. These migrations have changed the composition and character of this country's population and altered the nature and quality of human relationships throughout the nation. Society today is largely cosmopolitan and urban; relationships in such a society stem from functional needs and are often impersonal and of short duration.

Consequently, one of the major problems facing America today -- man's inability to get along with his fellow man -- must be faced by rural, suburban, and urban educators. Tolerance, open-mindedness, respect for the rights of others, the ability and inclination to judge people as individuals, although difficult concepts to teach because they stem from feelings rather than facts, are attitudes essential to the health of this nation's democracy. Regardless of whether students are educated in a rural or urban community, or in a heterogeneous or homogeneous classroom situation, in the armed services, in college, and in educational travel they will soon come into contact with people of many different backgrounds, and they will inevitably live and work to some extent in multi-group situations.

Educators must provide <u>all</u> students with the competencies required for a productive life within society. It is, therefore, strongly recommended that schools plan and <u>follow the most direct, efficient inservice study procedure they can initiate</u>. The following guidelines, utilized at their appropriate <u>levels of complexity</u>, are suggested for curriculum planning at all grade levels, kindergarten through grade twelve.

Guidelines

Since the subject matter of minority groups is not commonly known, elementary and secondary teachers cannot be expected to incorporate it successfully into the curriculum without some in-service study. Consequently, one of the first steps is for the administrator, the teachers, and the instructional materials specialist to discuss together their present program and its needs regarding the inclusion of material about minorities. The school librarian or learning resources specialist should be asked to prepare and make available to all teachers a list of the present library holdings on (1) American minorities and (2) psychology and sociology of prejudice and related areas.

A good basic collection of materials on the various racial and ethnic groups and on the nature of prejudice appropriate to the various subject areas should be acquired as soon as possible. To the bits and pieces of information within standard reference works and in full treatment in separate publications, new materials in print, on recordings, and in multi-media are appearing on the market every week. Bibliographies are being compiled, and some annotated, by a number of urban school systems, professional teachers' organizations, civil rights agencies, and publishers. A few of both the bibliographies and the expository publications are designed for specified grade levels. Much of the material is free or inexpensive in paperback form. With these helps, the instructional materials specialist and the teaching staff should select instructional materials of many different kinds for future purchase. The groups should also investigate the possibility of available educational television programs on the subject.

It is necessary then for each teacher to do background reading -- journals, newsletters, research reports, book reviews, books. When reading, the teacher should take notes which can be inserted into units where minority group content will be applicable. The age and maturity level of the students will determine the appropriate content. As the preparatory work progresses, the pages of the reference from which each note is drawn should be jotted down so that the section can be found again before introduction of the material in class. Also, after each note, two or three research, writing, or speaking assignments that seem promising should be listed, and perhaps a brief reminder of a class discussion topic that has come to mind during the reading. These notes should not be looked upon as ideas to be imposed upon students. Rather they are guidelines for the teacher's work as class challenger and moderator, guidelines the teacher knows are based on the most current scholarly research about minority groups.

The introduction of minority group content into the curriculum has little possibility of being effective unless the teacher is competent and sympathetic about minorities. Consequently, the teacher should read related subjects such as prejudice, poverty, and discrimination before he leads his students in a discussion of issues that can be distorted by lack of knowledge and strong emotions. In addition, he must be willing to examine his own attitudes, feelings, and behavior concerning individuals and groups; a teacher who shows a willingness to question his views will have a more effective response from his students when he asks them to question theirs.

In addition to individual reading, the teachers in a group should study and discuss the nature of prejudice and its implications for the students, the community, the nation, the world, and themselves. Whether or not this information is ever used directly as class lesson material, as background knowledge for teacher understanding and emotional maturity regarding the whole issue it is absolutely vital.

The teacher, then, should collect instructional materials for his own subject area. The textbook, as the most universally used instructional material, perpetuates many of the attitudes that are prevalent in society. A variety of up-to-date instructional materials, rather than a single type, can be used to compensate for the inadequacies of textbooks, organized to fit into existing courses, and used to provide for the complexity of needs, individual differences, experiences, and interests of the students. Obsolete instructional materials which omit topics on minority groups or which present stereotypes of minorities should be discarded unless they can be used as data for comparison and analysis. Other instructional sources which could be incorporated into the regular course sequence are spokesmen for the groups and viewpoints being taught. Textbooks, instructional materials, and resource persons need to be selected which will present a realistic and balanced picture of America's multi-cultural society.

Purely factual instruction about minority groups, although accurate, will not materially alter attitudes, feelings, and behavior toward these groups. The teacher will, therefore, have to present to his students such direct evidence of the fundamental dignity and worth of all individuals and groups as documents, biographies, drama, novels, poetry, reference books, newspaper and magazine articles, films, filmstrips, records, tapes, photographs, pictures.

It is important also for every student to have an appreciation of his own group's cultural heritage. This will strengthen his self-image and provide him with an intrinsic motivation to achieve. It will also encourage him to appreciate the culture and contributions of other groups. The task of the teacher is to dispel the sense of cultural barriers between group and group. Educators should be concerned not so much in showing the contributions and the qualities of particular groups as in imparting a sense of the greater common heritage, the transcending common interest, so that the concept of what is "ours" becomes inclusive, not divisive.

It is best that a study of minorities not be a single lesson or unit approach -- many texts in use today have such a chapter or unit -- since a study of this type contributes to a fragmented incomplete view and suggests that minority group culture is parallel to rather than an integral part of the culture of the United States and Washington. Minority group content should be integrated in the existing elementary and secondary curriculum where appropriate and realistic. Secondary schools that wish to offer a separate elective course in minority group culture in addition to integrated material should do so, but their primary concern should be the inclusion of this content in the entire curriculum so that all students may have the benefit of learning about minorities.

Directed free discussion should be the key teaching strategy for introducing minority group content in the classroom. Students at all grade levels can profit from participation in this type of discussion if plans are made for the differences in the ability of students to use this skill. In using this teaching strategy, the teacher should guide students from instructional materials to open converstaions about their meaning and significance. They should be encouraged to disagree with anyone's ideas, including the teacher's, but they must listen to everything anyone else says.

Lecturing about human relations and trying to decree respect for differing individuals and groups will not develop a tolerant personality. Instead questions need to be asked which keep students thinking for themselves and which keep the discussion vital and on topic. If students discuss a topic and come up with "wrong" answers from a positive human relations viewpoint, the teacher should introduce new evidence into the discussion which contradicts these conclusions, play a role opposite to that of the class, bring in a community resource person to confront students with another aspect of the problem, or present another film or book to make telling points.

The free discussion teaching strategy is designed to guide the student from sympathy, his natural reaction to the direct evidence that has been presented toward rational examination of social problems and possible remedies for problems. These discussions can lead to many classroom activities: written or oral reports, individual and/or group research, debates, role playing. The teacher should encourage an interdisciplinary approach with excursions into psychology, sociology, anthropology, history, and economics. This discussion stage of the learning activities is the bridge between studying direct evidence and using that evidence as a basis for developing tolerance, an open mind, respect for the rights of others, and the ability and inclination to judge different peoples as individuals. It should lead students toward foundations of knowledge and opinion that will help them think critically about social issues, investigate various approaches, and apply policy-making and problem-solving skills.

Students should be evaluated not by what they have to say in class discussion, but by how adequately they make the case for their judgments, theories, and suggested solutions. However, their positions must square with the best factual information as gleaned from the instructional materials the teacher has presented or suggested for his students. In developing test questions a teacher should choose words which will challenge and elicit information about the attitudes, feelings, and behavior of his students toward minorities -- analyze, characterize, clarify, compare, criticize, demonstrate, differentiate, evaluate, find the cause, furnish evidence, justify, show the fallacy of, substantiate, validate. In addition, the teacher should attempt some overall evaluation of his teaching in terms of changes in the attitudes, feelings, and behavior of his students toward minority groups.

Guidelines which might be used in such an evaluation follow:

1. *Has there been evidence of increased interest in and respect for minority groups as indicated by*

   a. *items of interest brought to class*
   b. *questions raised*
   c. *suggestions for book reports, songs, plays, or skits?*

2. *How do students in their drawings, compositions, or reports show their awareness of the different groups and individuals that make up the school and community?*

3. *Do the students show an increased awareness and understanding of minority group problems?*

4. *In the classroom and lunchroom and on the playground, do the students segregate themselves?*

5. *What evidences are there of new intergroup contacts outside the school?*

6. *Have incidents involving members of different groups increased or decreased?*

Introducing material about minority groups may bring out unexpected resistance in students, parents, and teachers. The reason is not difficult to discover; it is difficult to abandon a long held belief or image, and the image of minorities has been a degrading one formed by histories, textbooks, and mass media. However, new instructional materials on minorities will interest students because the material is fresh and will provide new dimensions to this country's culture, whatever social conflict it uncovers.

Replacing the myths of the past with the truth will not be easy, but as Robert F. Kennedy stated in 1966:

> *"...each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring, these ripples build a current that can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance.*
>
> *The future does not belong to those who are content with today, apathetic toward common problems and their fellow man alike, timid, and fearful in the face of new ideas and bold projects. Rather it will belong to those who can blend vision, reason and courage in a personal commitment to the ideals and great enterprise of American Society."*

A child's educational environment need not be crippling forever. Educational systems need not remain inflexible forever. Needed alternatives in educational practice can be found; and education for all children is not a dream.

Educators in Washington State possess the knowledge and skills to create equal educational opportunity now. Courage and freedom to apply that knowledge can indeed transform the vision of our forefathers into reality for all children.